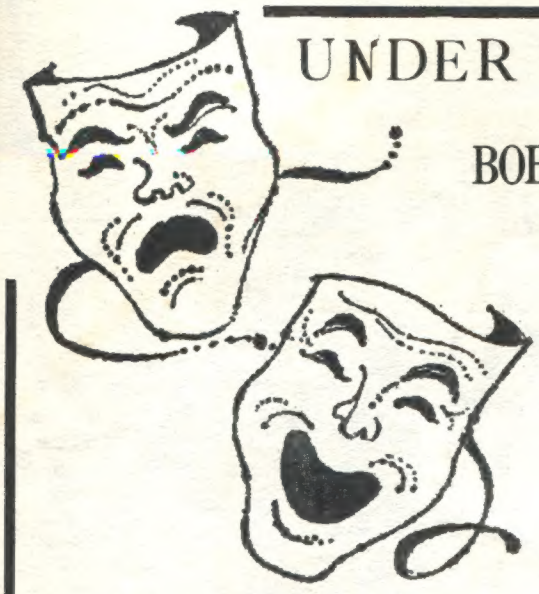
THE DARKNESS BEYOND



UNDER THE ARCH A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

BOB SCHOENFELD

With this issue of OTDB we reach a turning point which may well mark the end of this publication. Undoubtedly the more perceptive among you saw it coming. I have never been one to conceal the truth from my readers and I feel that all subscribers deserve to know what is responsible for this turn of events.

As long as I have been associated with David Kaler through my having inherited OTDB from Derrill Rothermich, he has been troubled frequently by a number of illnesses and he has spent much time in the hospital. Now, at the end of his second year as Executive Secretary, his illnesses have increased to the stage that demands he confine his time and energy and money on matters of a more serious nature than fandom.

When Dave realized that he would be unable of offer his services to the Academy again, he contacted Mark Hanerfeld--a fellow New York fan--and asked Mark to take control until an election could be held. Mark contacted me, naturally, and we both decided that the Academy as it was wasn't really worth the bother to try to salvage by an election...we felt that there were simply too many foolish, inpractical facets to the Academy and that these were what was responsible for its failure to unite fandom. And rather than attempt to rebuild or reorganize the thing, we have decided to announce that the Academy, as of this issue, no longer exists.

Those of us who are members are no doubt wondering what will become of their $2.00 dues. Both Mark and I are paid members as of this year and all any of us have received on our membership has been the '66 Academy Con booklet. I am not sure of the exact figure, but the Treasury exceeds the $700 mark. Dave has promised to return the treasury...turning it over to myself or Mark ...but just when he will be able to do so we do not know. However, members have our word that if the money is received it will in some way be turned back to the membership. Either we will have some special publications sent out free...or we will actually send the money back. I don't know right now.

I am aware that many fans still feel that some sort of organized fandom could be advantageous. I myself would agree to that...but I am not so sure that it is possible. Neverthe less, Mark and I have discussed some basic ideas for beginning some sort of new organization with a completely different foundation and better set-up. As I have said, there are numerous inherent faults in the original concept--and this new organization would try to improve upon the old idea by avoiding its mistakes. Just if or when this might materialize is anybody's guess...but if it does the announcement will be widely circulated.

In my first paragraph I mention that this turn of events could mean the end of OTDB. To explain I must first point out a few things: When Derill passed OTDB to me it was his (and Kaler's) feeling that a low subscription cost would be advantageous in securing a wide range of subscribers. Unfortunately, that low price was scarcely enough to keep the publication going indefinitely and asside from monies that come in regularly for new or renewed subs, the initial fund ran out quite soon. Dave insisted that we remain offset and, in order to keep the magazine solvent, regularly contributed from his own pocket.

But now, with Dave unable to continue this practice, some manner of fund-raising must be set up or the publication simply cannot continue--in this or any form. I cannot really bring myself to terminate this publication after nursing it for over a year and improving it to some degree. The ever-growing list of subscribers proves that fans, too, consider it a worthwhile magazine. And, too, Mark is able to continue to do the news column in Dave's absense...though he doesn't have the wide range of contacts Kaler did...and if this new organization were to become a reality, the group would need some sort of newsletter to bridge the communication gap with members.

The solution, then is this: I am hereby declaring that all previous subscriptions are invalid. I am asking that all subscribers re-subscribe at a different rate and that they place their support behind the Gateway Club to try to save OTDB. I will wait about one month before asking Mark to send another news column which should be sufficient time for all subscribers to re-order for next issue. I am setting the subscription rate at a base 25¢ per issue which is scarcely too much to ask considering the postage hike and printing costs. Please do not order more than four issues at a time ($1.00). I absolutely guarantee that, response willing (ie, if enough subscriptions are renewed) there will be another issue. If I do not receive enough subscriptions I will refund what money I have received...in full. It will be very important that you re-subscribe just as soon as possible...and I hope that you,too, consider OTDB a fanzine worth saving--to the extent of putting your support behind us and resubscribing.

I think that the quality of OTDB speaks for itself and I think that Gosh Wow! #1 proves that we will deliver what we promise--whether the Academy does or not. Apart from publishing their newsletter (OTDB), the Gateway Club is in no way associated with the Academy and now that OTDB is not associated with the Academy there will undoutedly be an improvement in performance...you can trust us to continue if you will re-subscribe.

No one regrets having to void subscriptions more than I...yet I myself am hardly responsible. The idea was bound to run out of gas eventually...Kaler couldn't have gone on paying indefinitely. Way back at issue 6 I aksed to raise the subscription cost before we undertook a large ad-campaign and Dave refused...and now we see the repercussions. And, ironically, while most of you are out a dollar or dollar and a half, I'm out over $10 myself on this issue alone, and that doesn't take into account the money I've spent for postage or supplies in past issues.

I'm afraid that we are all out.

I will, however, offer one bonus: To those of you who have received two issues or less (not counting this one) I will give a free set of back issues while they last. Simply send me a letter requesting it and I'll send them out as soon as I can.

Assuming that support will warrnt future issues, I will continue to run covers and Mark will continue the news. When necessary there will be an editorial and when room permits there will be the Fanzine Index. The future issues will continue to be offset (I'm in a poor position to do it any other way). Advertisments are greatly needed to offset costs and I am setting a new, lower ad-rate to encourage fanzine editors to take out ads. A quarter page ad is $3, half page $5 and full page is only $10. Please write before submitting any ad

About this issue I must point out that, scattered in Mark's news column you'll find many numbers in parentesis such as "(2/1)". This indicates the month and day, respectively, that the issue mentioned should appear on the stands. I should also mention that, in order to conserve space, I am cutting down on the number of individual issues we will mention in the up-coming titles from DC. In many ways this is akin to an advertisment...and it is't too logical as DC itself gives this information in their Direct Currents column. However, we will continue to run all the more important issues.

Finally, I would like to say that while Gosh Wow has been slightly delayed, fans should expect it sometime in the next couple of months.

WHAT'S NEWS

MARK HANERFELD

I would like to begin my first news-column with some personal observations on the upheaval that has shaken the comics-industry these past few months. In gathering material for this column I have had access to materials and information which fans may not be seeing for several months to come--but from this information I have come to the following conclusion (or opinion, if you prefer):

Judging from material due to appear, I think the most significant change that will take place in the industry will be a complete reversal in the positions of Marvel and DC. I do not mean this in the business/financial sense, but rather in the nature and content of the books themselves. While both companies are making plans to expand their titles, Marvel will be sticking principally to their old, tried-and-true formulas whereas National, under the creative influence of Carmine Infantino, will be experimenting with new ideas in comic art. All this should lead to more spirited competition between these two giants of the comic business, and, hopefully, "bigger and better" books for fans.

By the time this issue of OTDB reaches you, the first changes should be making their appearance and in the months following it will become more and more pronounced.

NATIONAL--DC

For the last couple of months Carmine Infantino has been experimenting with ways to improve the books already in the DC lineup. Now he has turned his attention to adding new and better features. If I may be permitted a brief prediction...watch out! To begin with, there are additional editorial changes taking place. George Kashdan has stepped down from the grind of editing to take on the grind of writing. To replace him, Carmine has hired Dick Giordano, former editor of the Charlton line and the man to whom fans give credit for giving that line a bright--if short-lived--spark of life. Dick will take over the following titles: Teen Titans, Aquaman, Blackhawk, Strange Adventures, The Creeper and the Secret Six. Moreover, Dick has brought some of the Charlton staff along with him--namely artists Jim Aparo and Pat Boyette and writers Denny (Sergius O'Shaugnessy) O'Neil and Steve Skates. Dick himself may be doing art for one or two stories in the Romance titles if time permits.

As for the fate of the other titles edited by Mr. Kashdan, Murry Boltinoff takes over Brave & Bold and Superboy (which Mort Weisinger asked to be relieved of). The Hawkman book (much to the chagrin of many fans) will probably be canceled and the characters used as a back-up feature in The Atom (or vice versa!) Either way, the book will end up under Julius Schwartz's editorship.

February brings the premier of the first issue of The Secret Six. The SS, scheduled for release on the 1st of the month, consists of a group of men and women blackmailed by their mysterious leader, Mockingbird, into spying for him. This book is the brainchild of Nelson Bridwell and it should be well worth watching. I think most fans are agreed on the fact that Deadman is a far more interesting character than previous characters before Carmine's take-over and I think that that was but a start.

Showcase 74 brings you into the world of Anthro. This is the story of a young man coming of age (sounds like the graphic story of a bar mitzvah) in a prehistoric world--his triumphs and failures (argh)--his discoveries and his survival in a savage land. This mag is the brainchild of Howard Post, a newcomer to DC who handles both story and art. 3/12.

Both Metamorpho and Metal Men are due for the axe soon.

Though Bob Hope has been cut, plans are afoot to bring back Super-Hip and the Faculty of Fear.

Neal Adams will soon be doing the Superman/Batman feature in World's Finest. It is interesting to note that at least half of the DC titles now appearing carry Adams' covers.

Showcase will be published 8 times a year which strikes me as being rather ridiculous as both Anthro and The Creeper were scheduled for their own books before their showcase issues ever appeared. /I neglected to add that this character "The Creeper" which Mark mentions here for the second time is due to appear in Showcase 73. It is the creation of Steve Ditko and it is a character wanted by both the underworld and police. But you probably knew that already since the issue is due out in January... Ed./

The next feature slated for Showcase is called "Angel And The Ape". It's a humor strip drawn by Bob Oskner. Angel is a lovely female private eye and the Ape is her partner. However, the Ape is just that--a highly intelligent ape and Angel is the only one who can understand his guttural language. This Ape, to give you an idea of how smart he really is, moonlights as a cartoonist.

There is also talk coming from DC of reviving the Phantom Stranger as a possible co-feature in House of Mystery.

While Nelson Bridwel will continue to plot the stories, the Inferior Five will soon have a new writer.

A new western title is scheduled to be added to the DC roster with Joe Orlando at the editorial control. That is all I know about it at the present--but I sure wouldn't mind seeing Alex Toth on a regular feature at DC (if the Top Gun book is any indication that Alex is going to be a regular...)

Mr. Orlando will also be taking over the editorship of Enemy Ace who, wonderfully enough, is to get his own magazine. This is due to the fact that Robert Kaniger has had to lighten his work-load for reasons of health.

The new Deadman book previously announced will not appear. Deadman will remain a feature in Strange Adventures under Dick Giordano.

Jack Miller has taken on the editorial chores on Wonder Woman in the hope that he can make it profitable.

And, finally, I am pleased to announce that a new book will soon make the scene from Steve Ditko. It's to be called The Hawk and the Dove...but more on that next time...

KING FEATURES

King Features has begun a new system of distribution wherein the Saalfield Publishing Company (the people who who published the Parade of Comics and Peanuts coloring books) will be placing the King Packs on the coloring book racks. (One might speculate as to whether or not the coloring book audience is below or equal in age to the principal comic book buying audience.) The newest Kings have a cover price of 15¢ which is what they will sell for in stores that break open the bags. There will be two more Reed Crandall Flash Gordon issues before King goes into an all-reprint format. This reprint material will come from the files of the Dell Comics (who, for all intents and purposes, is out of the comics business--except for prior TV and movie commitments.) The reprinted books, titles such as Kona, Nukla, Naza, Brain Boy, ETC., will carry the number of the original publication, even though they may well be published out of sequence. (Again one may speculate as to whether such titles will sell for King when they evidentally proved unsuccessful for Dell.)

Bill Harris expects to start releasing four comic packs a month in the near future, all of them reprints. For the present, King will skip the January releases and publish in February then skip a month or two before going into the four reprint packs a month system. I have also been told that King has also acquired the rights to reprint the material from the now-defunct ACG group (though I was previously under the impression that DC had the rights to those titles.)

For additional clarification of just what is happening at King I refer you to Bill Harris' letter elsewhere in this issue.

MARVEL

With Marvel's policy of silence where news is concerned is always difficult to find anything out. And as often as they change their minds it is often hard to call anything definite. However, with a bit of guesswork and some information from an outside source I've come up with the following...

The Western titles and Millie the Model have all been dropped. Also due to be dropped are Strange Tales Tales of Suspense and Tales To Astonish which will be replaced by Doctor Strange, Captain America and the Incredible Hulk. There will also be a magazine featuring Iron Man in the Submariner sharing a book, and it will be labeled with a "#1" when it appears. However, after the first issue, these two characters will have their own books in February.

Captain Marvel will be getting his own book and will probably be replaced in Marvel Super Heroes (now a Showcase-type book) by Doctor Doom, appearing in a strip of his own. Art on that strip will be by Bill Lignante, who has drawn the Phantom for Gold Key and King.

Just where all this leaves Tales of Shield, I don't know. However, I do know that, even with all the added effort Jim Steranko puts into his art to jazz it up that sales have not improved too markedly.

MISC. BOOKS

The Tippy Teen and Go-Go books are still going strong for Tower. However, for the adventure fans there will be an 18th issue of Thunder Agents to test the market. If it can do any better, now that the competition is drastically less, there may be hope for continuance of the book.

After the release of the few issues of Creepy and Eerie that were edited by Bill Harris, these two magazines went into a series of reprints mixed with a small amount of original material. Just who is to replace Harris I don't know, but most recent issues bill James Warren as both publisher and editor--which is probably a temporary action until someone is found. Look for a story by Dave Kaler in the not-too-distant future.

With Dick Giordano and the nucleus of the Charlton staff having left that company, news is especially hard to come by. One thing I should mention is that it may well be worth your while to check all the Charlton titles as they hit the stands--especially if you're a fan of artists PAM or Jim Aparo.

Starting in Cheyenne Kid 66 there will be a new space-western strip called "Wander". Story is by Dennis O'Neil and art by Jim Aparo.

Russ Manning, famous for his adaptations of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan for Gold Key Comics has taken over the art chores on the Syndicated Tarzan Newspaper strip. The strip has reverted back to the characters as they were originally created by Burroughs. Korak, Meriem and other characters of the original novels are once again appearing in the strip. Whether or not this will leave Russ time to continue to work for Gold Key is questionable, but he will continue to do as much as possible. And if you are a Manning fan, be sure to pick up a copy of the Camelot coloring book available from Whitman...Russ and Mike Royer colaborated on it.

I dunno if any of our readers are really interested in all the models put out by the Aurora Plastics Corporation, but their latest addition is a model of the space coupe from the Dick Tracy comic strip. It is to go on sale soon and will contain small figurines of the major characters.

Some issues back we mentioned a 75¢ comic magazine by the men associated with Mad Magazine. The contents of the pub will be varied and run into war, adventure, super hero, humor, etc. People who have seen some of the art and contents tell me that it is done by some of the finest talents in the business. There will be one issue of this all-color, slick-papered mag and it will be left on the stands "till it dies!" If sales should prove favorable future issues will follow.

/Something along these lines which I feel is worth mentioning here is this matter of magazines such as the one described above. You recall last issue Larry Brody's column "Under The Upas Tree" in which he speaks of, among other things, the King Packs. In this issue's letter column you'll find some brief comments by Richard Kyle on that same subject. He points out that distribution being what it is, the only logical "out" is, perhaps, a comic magazine on adult-racks selling for 50¢ and up. Let's hope that ventures such as the above prove successful as it may be the only hope.--Ed./

Keep a look-out for a new item from the Topps Bubble Gum people--Krazy Little Comics! They have only been released to a limited market...they come three comics to a 5¢ package and there are 16 booklets in the set. These are satiric comics along the lines of the Inferior Five or Brand Ecch. The titles are The Lone Rancher, Mandrain the Magician, the Bantam, Prince Violet, Tarsam, Sub-Marine Man, The Incredible Hunk, The Meekly Thaw, Captive American, The Amusing Spider-Guy, the Fantastic Fear, Blunder Woman, The Flush, Badman, Stuporman, Jester's League of America. The 2½ x 3½ booklets have one panel a page with a front-cover splash and a back-cover satire on various ads carried in the comics and six interior pages. All of which adds up to a small 8-page comic which, believe it or not, somehow manages to be funny. They have obviously been written by someone who knows the comics and the art is by Gil Kane, Wally Wood and Al Plastino.

Big Little Books are back... The new series of BLBs is out from Whitman. They are 39¢ each and contain interior color. The 12 new titles include Dick Tracy, Bonanza, Flipper, Lassie, Tarzan, Tom & Jerry, Bugs Bunny, Popeye, Donald Duck, Woody Woodpecker, The Man From UNCLE, The Invaders. If you like them, you may want to join me in urging the Whitman people to reissue the out-of-print BLBs such as Green Hornet, The Shadow, and Flash Gordon.

Whitman also publishes Big Book Adventures, in the form of text with illustrations of characters appearing in comics or TV. Titles are I Spy, Green Hornet, Man from UNCLE, Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea, Bonanza and others.

If you are a fan of the Modesty Blaize Comic Strip from England and follow the adult novels, you should pick up I, Lucifer (Doubleday, $4.95). It's the best one yet.

Pulp fans will want to be sure not to miss Ron Goulart's new book, The Hard-Boiled Dicks. It is published in paperback by Pocket Books and is quite a bargain for 50¢. While there are no illustrations, you'll find stories by some of the greats in the field.

Pulp fans may also want to check out The Continental Op by Dashiell Hammett. The Op originally appeared in The Black Mask pulp. Dell, 1468.

Hunter's Hell Cats face their "toughest mission yet" "Mission-Survival" in Fighting Forces 113 (3/14).

The 80 Pg Giant Superboy #147 features the Legion of Super Heroes. It contains a new, never-published story "The Origin of the Legion". If the reaction to new material in the giants proves favorable, expect to see more of it. (3/14)

Kubert cover on House of Mystery 174--something about a hand behind the door...(3/14)

The Sgt. Rock story in Our Army At War 192 is a book-lengther called "A Firing Squad For The Sergeant" and it again features those children of war, the teenage freedom fighters of Unit Three.(2/1)

Challengers of the Unknown are hunted by "The Robot Hounds Of Chang" in #61. (2/1)

Issue 36 of the Atom brings us into the "Duel of The Dual Atoms" as the Atoms of both earths meet. (2/1)

Johnny Peril, the scientist/soldier of fortune whose adventures appeared in All-Star and Sensation Mystery returns in The Unexpected #106. (2/6)

The 80 pg Giant Flash #178 features Flash's team-ups with Green Lantern, Kid Flash and the Flash of Earth Two. (2/8)

Here's a comic you must not miss: Baron Hans Von Hammer--THE ENEMY ACE--in "The Slayers And The Slain" in Star-Spangled 138. What more can we say? Buy two and give one to a friend.

It's the "Return Of The Death Goddess" when Medusa uses Hawkgirl to gain vengeance upon Hawkman in 25. 2/15

Stanley & Monster take over the old Fox & Crow title with #109. Bob Oskner does the art. (2/22)

"So Thunders The Canoneer" as Batman teams up with the Atom in Brave & Bold 77. (2/22)

A blind lamp-lighter seems to be robbing a city "blind" in Green Lantern 60 until GL shines a "Spotlight on the Lamplighter." 2/27

It is with much regret that I conclude my column with the news of the death of Mac Raboy--an artist well-known to fans for his excellent art on such books as Captain Marvel Junior and the Green Lama. His most recent work could be found on the Flash Gordon Sunday comic strip. He died on December 23rd at the age of 53.

Late Notes & Notices

Marvin Wolfman tells me that he and Len Wein have sold their first story professionally to Castle of Frankenstein. Actually, it's a seven-page adventure-mystic type of strip and it's called "The Conjurer." He is not sure just which issue of CoF the strip will run in, but it should be either the next one (due out) or the one after it. Marvin goes on to say that he also did the fanzine reviews for the same issue and that I might expect generous plugs for OTDB and Gosh Wow! for which I thank him...

Norman Stewart tells me that he and Mike Benton are making plans to publish the "definitive zine on Disney". He would like to hear from any and all fans of the late Walt Disney and he plans to include information on every media in which Disney's characters have been featured. Interested fans can reach him at Box 1467 Lenoir Rhyne College, Hickory, No.Car. 28601.

Some months back I received a most impressive book but, for one reason or another, have neglected to mention it here. The name of the book is A Nation Grieved and it consists of many of the most significant editorial cartoons to appear just after the announcement of the assasination of president John F. Kennedy. The book is 134 pages long and was compiled by Captain Raymond Jajski. The price is $5 and more than worth it to the serious student of comic art. I, personally, have long been a fan of editorial cartoons and was therefor especially pleased to have such a beautiful collection given to me. The emotional impact of these cartoons, even with some conspicuous absensces, is as great or greater than the thousands of words that have since been written on the subject. I heartily urge all fans of editorial cartoons to purchase a copy and give it my highest recomendation. -- A special thanks to Tom Fagan and the Charles E. Tuttle Company...

The scene taken from Spiderman at the right appeared in a not-too-long-ago issue of Esquire Magazine. It was in an article on violence in our lives and media. I didn't read the article, but thot you would find the caption of interest.

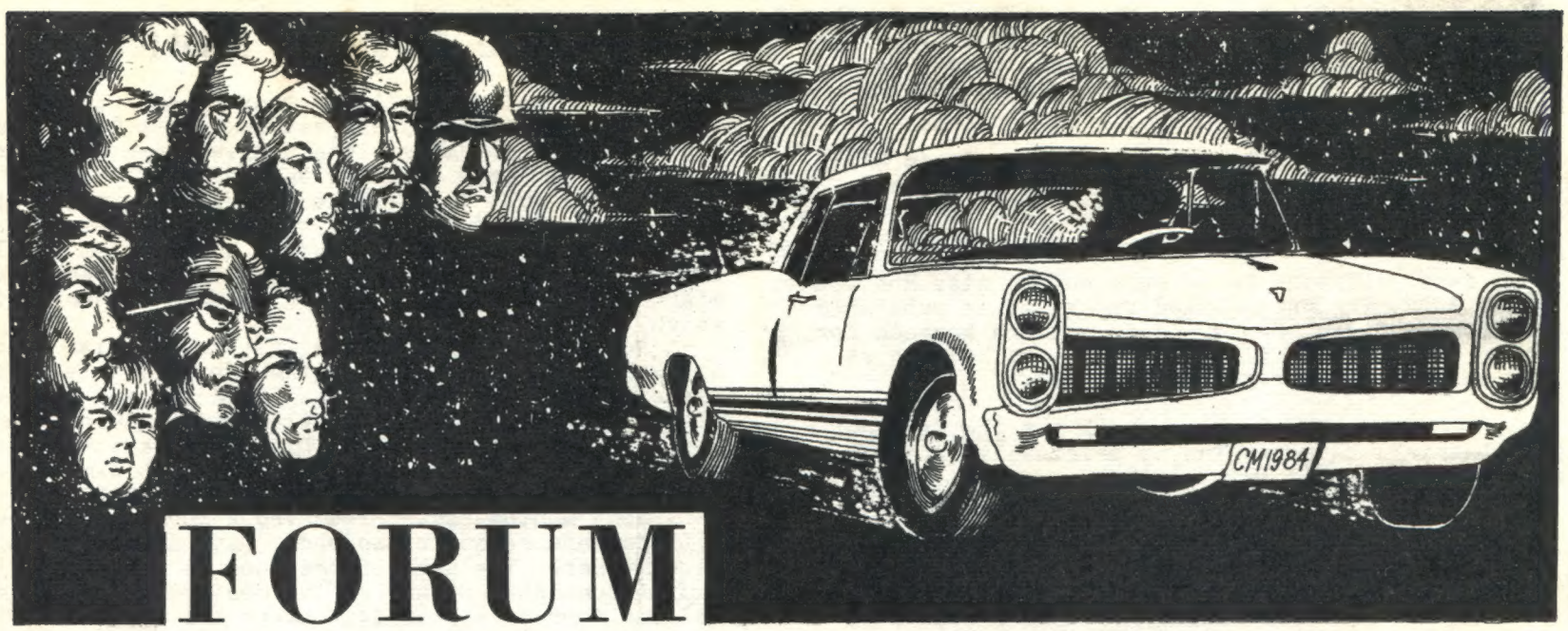
THE FUNNY BOOKS

The above moment, forever immortalized, is from a recent issue of *Spider-Man* comics. Upon what meat doth our Little Caesar feed? This is one of the country's top-selling joke books, very well done, chocked with ZOK and WAP, not to mention witticisms on the subject of maiming and bone-crushing.

HEROES UNLIMITED 2

Heroes Umlimited is the first all-comic oriented fan publication to come out of Ireland. I received a copy of issue #1 through the kindness of its editor, Anthony Roche, and immediately wrote and offered to distribute copies of #2 for him in America. Copies of Heroes Unlimited #2 are now available from me for only 50¢ mailed flat. Among its features are an editorial by Anthony, "The Origin of the Phoenix" a text-hero, "Just A Bunch of Crazy, Mixed-Up Kids" an article on the Marvel characters, an article on the history of the American Comics Group, an article on the JSA, the usual ads, letter column and a unique new strip called "Elemento". The entire issue is forty pages long and printed on high-quality paper by mimeograph. It features an offset cover.

Perhaps the principle attraction of this publication to American readers is the oportunity to make contact with an established British audience of fans. Here may be your oportunity to establish correspondance/trade agreements with British fans (Anthony himself is in need of a supplier of many American titles). While issue one and two have gone out to predominantly British audiences, I feel confident in saying that, with an increase in the size of its American audience, there will be a greater trend towards articles on the British characters and heroes. In all honesty, I will say that while this zine is no Alter Ego, it is better than many American publications and I think you will find it worthwhile. Order from Robert Schoenfeld, 9516 Minerva, St. Louis, Mo. 63114. 50¢.



FORUM

Richard Kyle
Box 16168
Long Beach, Calif. 90806

Under The Upas tree is interesting. However, Larry Brody really hasn't come to grips with the real problem of declining comic book circulations. It is--simply--distribution. It doesn't make any difference, actually, how good or bad a comic book is if it cannot get on the retail newsstand. The number of retail outlets for comic books has been declining for years, and the number continues to decline. There are fewer newsstands that carry comic books today than there were last year, and the year before that and the year before that and so on. Retailers don't want to handle comic books. It is just as much trouble for them to put out one comic book on the racks as it is for them to put one copy of Playboy--but it takes five comic books to equal the profit on one Playboy. (Actually, it's more trouble to handle a single comic book: the racks have to be tidied up more often and kids get in the way of more profitable customers.) Now, if the comics can't get on as many stands as they used to, it follows that overall circulation is bound to decline, regardless of the outstanding sale of a few leading comic books. And ultimately, if the number of newsstands carrying comics continues to decline, the sales of the leading comics will be similarly affected, as well. I suspect that a lot of them are virtually selling out on many newsstands. What will happen when those stands are gone? How hard will regular readers search for their favorites, going from store to store, block to block? That's the real problem. Comic books are just not profitable enough per unit, to genuinely make it worth most retailers' time to carry them. And I see no practical solution outside of a radical format change --one that permits comics to successfully sell for 50¢ or more, so that the retailer can make a genuine per unit profit. That's the way it is.

Bill Harris
King Features Synd.
235 E. 45th St.
NY, NY. 10017

Since we have taken the King Comics off the newsstands and they aren't so easily found everywhere, most fanzine editors have retailiated by not sending me their magazines. So the latest issue of OTDB was more welcome than you know!

There seems to be more than the usual amount of confusion about the numbering of our new Jungle Jim book. No wonder! The first issue was called #5. I've had at least 50 requests for the first 4. Our second issue, the original by Wally Wood, which will be published to go on sale in March (as things stand now) will be called #21.

The reason for this is a little confusing in itself. This first issue is a reprint of one that was first published as a Dell Comic back in 1955. As you know, all of the comics we--or anyone else--publish are sold ober and over again in foreign markets. Foreign clients order them by issue number. Now, if we call our first issue #1, which seems the likely thing to do, it would foul up the foreign operation. So it seemed better to confuse our US readers instead. The second issue is 21 for the same basic reason. The Dell series went up to #20 before it was killed--we have 20 issues available for foreign countries. When this Wood issue is published we'll have 21, and so on.

Most confusion in numbering with the most publishers comes from problems like this. Sometimes a title is changed in a certain series, but the basic series stays the same so the numbering continues on and collectors tear their hair out.

Speaking of confusion: At this moment, I have no idea just what sort of publishing schedule we'll follow in 1968. We have just arranged with Saalfield Publishing Company to take over our distribution for us. They are experienced marketing people in just the area we've been trying to crack for a year. At the moment, they are analysing our mistakes--and we make plenty of them--and making recommendations that will make our books more available.

First of all, we know that we'll increase our number of titles from the present six to at least 12. At the same time, we'll decrease our frequency from monthly to quarterly. We've held up the next issues originally scheduled to ship in December. The group that includes Flash Gordon 11 is the last until at least the end of February. After that we'll have two issues of each of our existing titles plus six others--and it's from there we're unclear about where we'll go. I've stopped production on all books, but have two issues of each completed.

For the first year or so, we'll probably pick up existing material from other publishers to save the editorial and engraving cost while we're solving the problems of distribution. If we do solve those problems, then we'll go back to original material again and everybody will be happy. I hope.

In the meantime, the outlook for fans and collectors of King Comics is a little bleak. But it is our intention to stay in business, and we're still convinced that the traditions of the industry are killing it. So we'll spend the next several months looking for the right answers.

Your comment on the back page of OTDB 16 about the interest of comic fans in rock and roll music touched a tender nerve around here. We're in the midst of producing a movie called "Yellow Submarine." It's an animated film being done in Lon don featuring the voices of the Beatles. I've enclosed some stills for you to look at and possibly use. The design is an art Nouveau style and was executed by Heinz Edelmann, a well-known German artist and designer. The film will be released in this country in July. Before then, you'll be hearin plenty about it and you'll see tons of merchandise on the characters. The Beatles have written some new music for the film and will also do some of their stuff from the Sgt. Pepper album.

As I get more news about this project, I'll pass it along. In the meantime, it's taking up all our time around here. As though we didn't have enough problems!

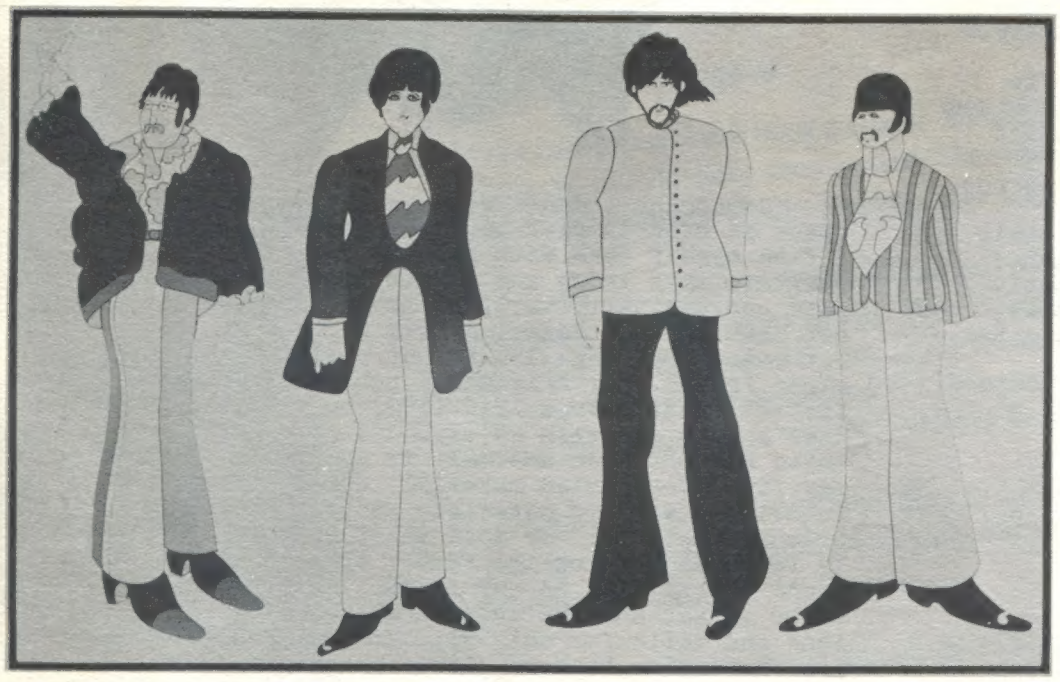
Thanks again for the magazine. Have a good Christmas. And good luck with your St. Louis Convention. It's a natural place to have one since just about all the comics in the US are printed within spitting distance of St. Louis.

/There isn't really anything I can add to Bill's letter--it's basically self-explanatory. I would like to say that if, indeed, some fanzine editors have cut him off their mailing lists, it shows very poor judge-

ment on their part. For myself I find it most gratifying that a professional like Mr. Harris takes enough interest in fandom and our interests to be interested in fanzines...and gosh knows he didn't have to explain for us the situation at King. I will gladly supply his address to any fanzine editor who would like to send Bill copies of their magazines...or you can send them to the Syndicate's address above.-- Also, you'll find samples of the Beatle cartoon film elsewhere in this issue.--Ed.7

Beatles!

copyright 1967 King Features Syndicate



GATEWAY CON II

Saint Louis In 1968

Since we are trying to save space in this issue of OTDB, we felt that, rather than running a large ad for Gateway Con II, that we would simply run the following message:

Shortly after this issue of OTDB appears we will have a short 4-8 page progress report ready for distribution on Gateway Con 2. This progress report will contain all the information fans will need on the June 28-30 con in St. Louis. It will contain a tentative schedule of events, directions on how to get to the hotel once in the St. Louis area, information on the hotel and a short rundown on the Gateway Club and our Guest of Honor--Roy Thomas.

Copies of this progress report can be had by anyone interested at no charge. If you think that you might possibly be free to attend, simply tell us so by a card or a letter and we will send you this progress report and a registration card as soon as we are able.

We think the 2nd Gateway Con will be one of...if not THE most FUN con ever held. Write to Bob Schoenfeld, Gateway Con II Progress Report, 9516 Minerva, St. Louis, Missouri. 63114. Do it today.

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LATE NEWS AND NOTES AND STUFF

The first foe that Doctor Doom will battle in his Marvel Super Heroes strip will be Stiltman.

Ric Estrada will be doing some of the art on the Wonder Woman strip in the future.

Joe Kubert has passed on the art chores on the Tales of the Green Berets comic strip to John Celardo--formerly the artist on the Tarzan newspaper strip. Joe has been dissatisfied with the scripting on the strip and the syndicate refused to let him plot his own stories. He has returned to National, and his work will be showing up more and more on their books. The change-over in artists should begin to show sometime in mid-January.

Boththe Girl From UNCLE and Man From UNCLE pulp magazines have ceased publication.

Sports Illustrated for January 8th has an article related to comics--Peanuts, I believe.

If the magazine "FM Guide" appears in your area you may want to check the January issue for an article on Radio Heroes.

Gold Key will soon be adding two new titles to their line-up. Both are 12¢. The first is a comic based on the KING KONG novel--not the movie. The second is a book called "Tiger Girl."

Joe Orlando takes over the editorial reins of the House of Mystery title at national soon.

Charlton has dropped the Premier book from their line up. The following titles will soon be published eight times a year: Hercules, Doctor Graves, Ghostly Tales and a new book, Ghost Man. The Charlton books, Strange Suspense Stories and Space Adventures will become regular mags.

Something I don't often do anymore is to take space in OTDB to give personal recomendation. However, I find myself here with part of a page left to fill to complete this issue and I felt that this would be a good oportunity to tell you about ODD Magazine. I do not mean the Odd Magazine Dave Herring once put out, but rather ODD Magazine as put out by Ray Fisher, a close friend. Ray originally published ODD as a science fiction fanzine from 1948-1952, but revived it just over a year ago with an expanded format. Now you can't quite pin ODD down and call it an SF zine. In ODD you may find sf-oriented material, comic strips, political mumblings, satiric material, satyric material, hippie-oriented material, or just about anything. ODD regularly features some of the finest art and writing to be found in anyzzine in any fandom. It is lavishly printed by offset and the current issue, #18, is 125 pages long and sells for only 75¢. If you are not afraid to read a fanzine that may leave you thinking when you finish...and if your interests expand into other areas beyond comics, I think you'll enjoy ODD Magazine. Contact Ray at 4404 Forest Park, St. Louis, Mo. 63114. Tell him Bob sent you.

Gosh Wow! #2, though slightly delayed, promises to be even greater than #1 which was a complete sell-out within two months of publication. We don't believe in shouting our ads with glaring adjectives...but whether you dig in-deepth articles or strips or fiction or whatever, you'll dig Gosh Wow! Here's why:

To begin the issue we have a front cover by pro Wally Wood and a back cover by pro Reed Crandall--both in everlovin' color. Articles include the history of the Prize Comics Group by Glen Johnson; "He Rides The Saddle With Danger--the story of the Rawhide Kid" by Wayne Warfield; "Open-Letter--In Defense of National" by Bob Cosgrove; Larry Brody's excellent column, "Under the Upas Tree" as continued from OTDB. Raymond Miller returns with another instalment in his "Question Corner" and a special index to Captain America Comics". Larry Brody is back with another episode of the Nightwalker--fandom's text-hero for fans who hate text-heroes! Rich Weingroff, though out of fandom, has done up an article he calls "A Suggestive Approach" with a very interesting approach to Frederic Wertham and related ideas. We also have a brief introduction to the unique Barnaby comic strip by Dick Feenberg and Mike Maxim's article on Man of War Comics.

You'll find not one, but two strips by the amazing George Metzger--fandom's mind-blowing artist. There's four pages of Bill Dubay in a Stuntman Picto Origin that'll leave you wondering...and much more. Art is by the whole OTDB gang...Dubay, Hutchinson, Metzger, John Fantucchio, Jim Jones, Ken Keller, Alan Hanley, Steve Kelez and Ronn Foss...and I'm probably forgetting somebody!

With luck, this 2nd issue of Gosh Wow should be out in one-to-two months...and we guarantee that it'll be worth waiting for. Photo offset throughout...wrap-around binding...gobs of neat stuff for only one buck. Sock it to Bob Schoenfeld, 9516 Minerva, St. Louis, Mo. 63114. Like now.

56 PAGES — 3-COLOR WRAPAROUND COVER PRINTED OFFSET AND SILK-SCREEN

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY

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ARTICLES BY

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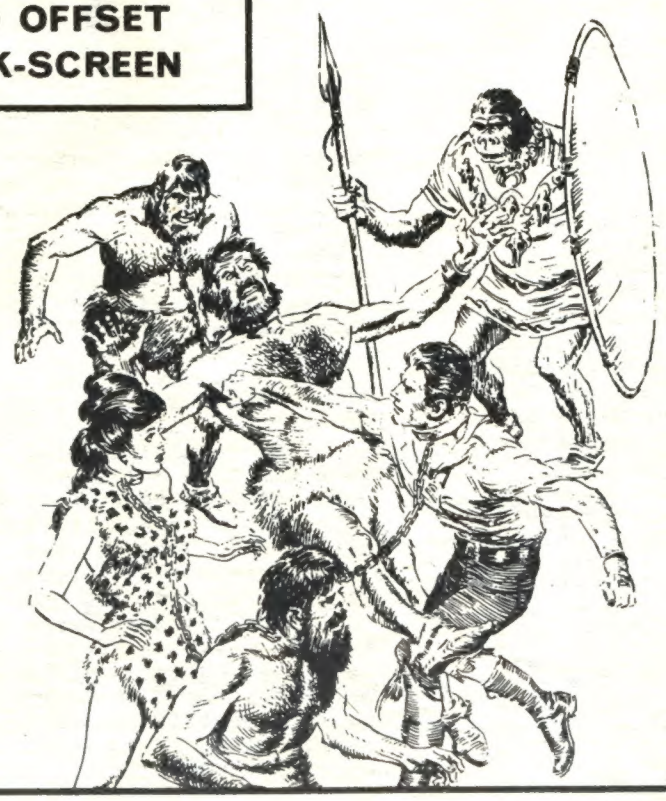

YARMAK THE FEARLESS ONE

By JOHN T. RYAN

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TINT

According to the latest Alley Poll, a lot of people thought TINT was the best fanzine of the year, and quite a few thought three of its articles were the best articles of the year. A lot of you probably thought a fanzine that good had to be soldout. Such is not the case. We still have copies of TINT 6 available. This is the issue which contained "Super-Heroes as Folklore" (showing the relationship of moder super-heroes and ancient folk heroes), and "Psychoanalysis and Superman" (which studied Superman from a Freudian point of view).

TINT 6 is Rick Weingroff's last publication. He wrote "Rocketeer Gossip" regularly for four years in the RB-CC, and this column was voted third best column of the year. He wrote articles for virtually every major fanzine published in the last four years. Slam-Bang, the original title of Tint, was a well-respected fanzine aimed at the thinking fan. Aside from placing near the top of the fanzine category of the Alley Poll a year ago, one of its main articles was voted by fandome the best article of that year.

This will be one of your last opportunities to get a copy of this excellent magazine. Although Rich has left fandom, he still has a number of unsold TINTs. These magazines, which are printed by multilith, cost just 50¢. He also has available a few copies of Slam-Bang 5, a special edition which contained articles "Inner of Other: A Theory on Superman!" You can get a copy of this controversial article for the original cover cost of 75¢. And, finally, he has a few copies of Slam-Bang 4 which, due to the limited supply, are now available for 75¢. All copies are mailed in manilla envelopes.

Don't miss this last chance to buy TINT. This is the magazine fans will remember in years to come. Other editors can make all the claims they want. Let them claim their magazine is the Greatest Fanzine Ever. But if you want substantiation of claims, check the Alley Poll and then buy TINT. This is the one magazine you won't forget.

Send all orders to Rick Weingroff, 3231 Southgreen Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21207. Be sure to include zip code.

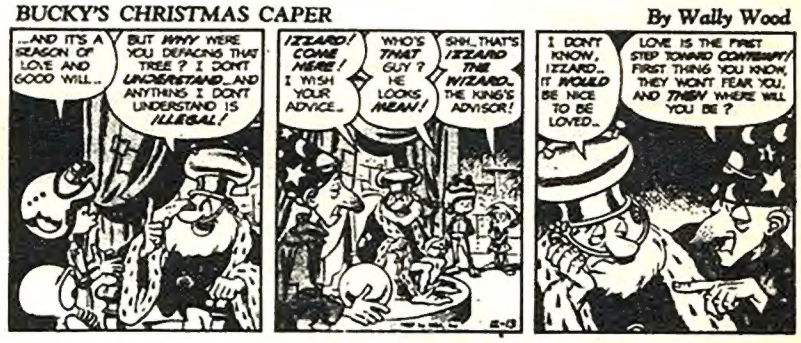
MORE LATE NOTES AND NOTICES

From Richard Kyle comes a short clipping from a recent LA Times: "Megers: National Periodical agrees to become new Kinney unit. Nation Periodical Publications Inc. has agreed to merge into a new subsidiary of Kinney National Service Inc., the two New York firms said thursday. Kinney will pay common and new convertible preferred shares worth about $55 million for the magazine and paperback distributor. Kinney is in the building maintenance, car rental, parking and funeral service fields."

Now on the stands in many book stores you will find "The Penguin Book of Comics" which is a paperback book of text and reproductions of old comics. Cost is either $4 or $5 depending on where you buy it. Best place to look might be college or university book stores...or order through Penguin or Doubleday.

Available now through Tower Press is the Cavalcade of Old Time Comic Strips. Cost is $2 to Box 412, Danvers, Mass. 01923. Foreign copies can be had for $2.50. 74 pages of old, old comics strips.

Have you seen Wally Wood's special Christmas strip, Bucky's Christmas Caper? The story ran for 15 days and is of the humorous style as per Pipsqueak Papers in Witzend 3. By now you will already of seen it if your paper bought it...if not, tough. I'm sorry that the sample below is so small...but that's how it came. Take note that Bucky is copyright 1967 by NEA syndicate.


BUCKY'S CHRISTMAS CAPER
By Wally Wood
...AND IT'S A SEASON OF LOVE AND GOOD WILL...
BUT WHY WERE YOU DEFACING THAT TREE ? I DON'T UNDERSTAND...AND ANYTHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS ILLEGAL!
IZZARD! COME HERE!
I WISH YOUR ADVICE...
WHO'S THAT GUY ? HE LOOKS MEAN!
SHH...THAT'S IZZARD THE WIZARD, THE KING'S ADVISOR!
I DON'T KNOW, IZZARD... IT WOULD BE NICE TO BE LOVED...
LOVE IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD CONTENT! FIRST THING YOU KNOW, THEY WON'T FEAR YOU, AND THEN WHERE WILL YOU BE ?

OTDB--formerly The Comic Reader--V2 N17, Whole Number 64, January 1968. Official newsletter of the Academy of Comic Art Fans and Collectors. OTDB is published by the GCAC and edited by Robert Schoenfeld, 9516 Minerva, St. Louis, Mo. 63114. Cost is $2.50 for a 12 issue sub ($2 to academy members) sent folded; $3.70 for 12 issues sent flat ($3.20 to Academy members). Single issues are 25¢/35¢. Overseas copies are 50¢.
Ad rates are $3 per quarter page and ads are available only to fanzine editors. Please write before submitting anything. Back issues of #7,8,10-14,16 can be had for 25¢ each. Also available are copies of TCR 42 & 46 for 50¢ each.
Contributions of art and news can always be used. News should be sent to Mark Hannerfeld, 42-42 Colden St; Flushing, NY. 11355 for verification. Artists should send samples of their work to Bob.
The number in the upper right corner of your mailing label designates the last issue you will receive in your subscription.

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Robert Schoenfeld
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On The Drawing Board 2/17/64

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